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Letter dated 23 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention a statement on the recent events in Serbia issued on 22 May 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(*Signed*) António **Monteiro**
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 23 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the recent events in Serbia issued on 22 May 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union is deeply concerned at the latest developments in Serbia and strongly condemns the takeover of Belgrade's independent TV station, Studio B, on Wednesday, 17 May and the simultaneous actions against Radio B292, Radio Index, the daily BLIC, as well as TV Mladenovac.

This action, following continuing mass arrests and detention of opposition representatives and student leaders, heavy punishment of independent media, repression of journalists and obstacles to public rallies of the democratic forces, is the latest in a series of repressive actions by the Milosevic regime.

The Council expressed its concern over reports regarding further measures to be taken by the regime against the democratic opposition and civil society.

The increasing policy of repression by the regime is leading the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia into a position of greater distance from free and democratic Europe, increasing the isolation of the country and running against the wishes of the Serbian people.

Almost ten years after the dismantling of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remains the only one among the south-east European States which still stands isolated from the mainstream of Europe. President Milosevic's regime alone is responsible for that situation.

The European Union has deployed great efforts to help the transition process of countries of the Western Balkans to democracy and a market economy, through substantial economic support, technical assistance, the offer of contractual relations and the development of enhanced political dialogue.

The European Union, together with the countries of the region, is also working in the framework of the Stability Pact to bring those countries closer to the prospect of integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures. Much has already been achieved. The European Union is looking forward to welcoming the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in this framework of cooperation after a successful democratic change in Serbia has been achieved.

The European Union's policy is not directed against the Serbian people, but against President Milosevic's regime, which is violating basic human rights in the most flagrant manner. The European Union has no quarrel with the Serbian people. This is why the European Union is providing substantial humanitarian assistance, developing a comprehensive dialogue with civil society and taking measures to support democracy and the independent media in Serbia.